1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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197 If the future viability of the myth is open to question, that of the language bond is not. A common language is a bond whose strength can hardly be overestimated; for pervasiveness and necessity no bond can match it. There are dialectical differences, particularly between north and south; a few quite regular sound shifts may cause brief difficulties in communication, and a few words have different meanings or are known only in a particular region. Nevertheless, there is almost complete mutual intelligibility. The Santal themselves are deeply [123] cognizant of language as a basis for intimacy and often indicated to me their desire that I properly learn their language. What little progress I made in this direction was greatly appreciated and always increased the intimacy which the Santal were willing to afford me. The much greater proficiency in Santali that my wife developed allowed her to be more of a Santal than I. As with the origin myth, Santali provides links with the neighboring Mundari-speaking people, though here intelligibility is not always satisfactory.

184 This is not the place to chronicle the numerous ceremonies, 776 rituals, ritual paraphernalia, deities, and religious concepts which the Santal hold in common. Apart from those important deities that belong exclusively to the various social units (house, local lineage, village, and the multi-village *Pargana*), there are a series of closely associated deities that belong to all the Santal. 776 These deities are worshiped in a variety of contexts but their 778 special abode is the "Sacred Grove" (*Jaher*), a clump of trees,* lying just beyond each village. The Sacred Grove is particularly the residence of *Marañ Buru*, a kind of "national spirit of

* These trees are left standing during the initial clearing when the village is established. They are largely *Shorea robusta* (*Sarjom*). [361] [824]

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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their Company houses. The temptation to interpret these changes as manifestations of increased secularity on a folk-urban continuum is great. However, a close look at the data suggests that the decline of ceremonies is not so much a question of increased secularity as it is a question of situational factors involved in migration to industrial employment. These factors operate directly to inhibit ceremonial practice and participation and operate indirectly to the same end by contributing to lack of solidarity in the *bustee* and city. Since ceremony both reflects and reinforces solidarity, its decline is both a cause and an effect of declining solidarity.

In the course of field work, I observed and participated in a number of ceremonies in the village, Fanderkuta, and the *bustee*, Daredih. Information concerning ceremonial practices was also obtained by interviews with informants from a variety of villages and *bustees*. Because of a suspicion that my presence, particularly in Daredih, had significantly altered the usual practice, my field assistant observed and reported on one ceremony, *Baha*, after I had left India. His report indicates that my suspicions were well founded. The reasons for decreased participation in and attenuation of ceremonies in the *bustee* as compared with the village are readily apparent if one examines the *Baha* ceremony as practiced in the two communities. Similar reports could be given of any of the other communal ceremonies.

Baha is the great spring festival celebrated in March* and ranking second in importance among annual ceremonies.† The word *Baha* means flower and refers here to the flowers of the Sal tree (*sarjom*; *shorea robusta*) and of the tree known as

* Actually in the Hindu month of *Phalgun* (February–March).

† The most important is known as *Sohrae* and will be briefly discussed later.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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Matkom (Hindi: *Mahua*; *Bassia latifolia*) which are collected and distributed as part of the ceremony.**

The manifest purpose of the *Baha* ceremony is to request the deities (*boṅga*) to prevent the occurrence of disease, a request which is made at every Santal ceremony and to provide good crops. The rites performed seem to express a general concern for the bounty of nature, respect for the village founder and his descendants, e.g., the headman and priest, and a reaffirmation of the ties of kinship, including an obligatory expression of joking behavior between "joking relatives" (*gonok' hoṛ*). The respect shown for the village founder and his descendants may, of course, be regarded as reflecting and reinforcing village solidarity.

The festival as practiced in the village lasts two days. On the first day the priest (*Naeke*) bathes to purify himself and immerses for ritual purity the implements to be used in the rites. Most of the men gather at his house and five among them become "possessed" (*rum*). Each is possessed by one of the five major deities worshipped during *Baha*. One speaks and acts as Jaherera, the Goddess of the Sacred Grove; one as *Mõṛeko*, the Five; one as *Liṭa*; one as *Marañ Buru*, Great Mountain; one as *Goram Boṅga*, Old Deity, who is the spirit of Maṅjhi Haṛam, the village founder. In the possessed state the five mediums go to the Sacred Grove to see that acts of purification previously performed there by the priest, including washing the three stones representing the deities of the grove and plastering the ground with purifying cow dung, have been properly performed.

On the next day the priest, accompanied by the same five

** The former is used for wood in building and for fuel and the leaves for making plates; the latter is the source of an intoxicating drink known as *Parua*.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

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calls the young men in the village together, sending the Godet, and says to them: Do 585
set up a marriage-shed for us here. Thereupon he brings the village priest. When he 793
has come, the village headman says to the bridegroom's father: Please give the priest 782
three fowls, one speckled and two white ones, three half-seers of rice, one pot of beer, and the necessaries for making a sacrifice. The priest takes all this to the sacred grove or somewhere in the open field and sacrifices the fowls in the name of the marriage-shed. He makes the following invocation: Here then, Jaher era, in connexion with so and so setting up a marriage-shed I am giving thee, handing thee a sacrificial fowl; mayest thou with pleasure, with favour, accept this, receive this; mayest thou caress this, deem this big; we are now going to such and such a village to be a bridegroom's party; on the road, in the forest may no sudden fear or alarm happen to us, no stumbling, no fall, no spells, no enchantments; to the right, to the left may you toss it away, spatter it away, Father my Ṭhakur. We shall eat, we shall drink, do not let stomach-ache, headache arise, be caused. With the friends may there be no strife, no quarrel, no evil, no enmity, no loss, no destruction, Father my Ṭhakur. While reciting this invocation he offers the speckled fowl to Jaher era. Thereupon he sacrifices one white fowl to The Five (Mõṛẹ̃ko Turuiko)[22], making a similar invocation. Lastly he sacrifices the remaining white fowl to Marañ buru, and to him also he recites an invocation in the same way. The village priest has brought a couple of men with him; they make a hash of the fowls and eat them, and the pot of beer they brought they also drink; thereupon they return home.

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The Jog Mañjhi then again goes to the marriage-shed and asks the young men: Have [824] •
you finished the marriage-shed or not as yet? They answer him: Yes, we have finished it. The Jog Mañjhi then says to them: Dig a hole in the middle of the marriage-shed; we shall put a Mahua tree down there. He next asks them: Have you finished digging the hole or not as yet? He says to them: Enlarge the hole down below in the ground. When they have done this, the Jog Mañjhi says to the bridegroom's parents: Bring three branches of raw turmeric and five cowries and three tips of dhubi grass. Grind the turmeric, mix three grains of sun-dried rice into the turmeric. They collect this and cover it up in a bundle, and where they have enlarged the hole, there they put it down. When this is done, they plant the Mahua tree in the dug hole, and when they have planted the Mahua tree they wrap a straw-rope round it up to the top.

Thereupon the Jog Mañjhi calls the woman, the conductor of ceremonies, and says to [343].
her: Plaster this with earth and make it smooth, and whitewash it with flour, and grind some red-ochre stone; when this is done, paint figures on the marriage-shed post, and paint pictures of the bride and bridegroom in front. The conductor of ceremonies does this.

Thereupon the Jog Mañjhi says to the young men who set up the marriage-shed: This [515]
is finished; now before anything else have some food and strengthen yourselves. He goes

[22] See Santal Dictionary s. v.

4 Cote Ẽm. Hon. – Bedding.

d. Mimicking.

We have something to make people in a way enjoy themselves, this is the game of mimicking. Only jocular people can perform this. Seeing this, people laugh awfully. In this game they show the faults of people by mimicking, e. g., how husband and wife act towards each other when in the sulks, how husband and wife go to her father's house, the sham crying of widows, the way of walking, dancing, eating, working, married people's behaviour, and so on. When they mimic women, they put on clothes like a woman, and making their voice sound like theirs they give themselves airs, and the people laugh, holding their stomachs. 536

e. Catching fish.

Catching fish is also joyful work. They catch fish in ricefield ponds, in dams, and in rivers. The headman of the village inside the boundaries of which the place for catching fish lies, makes a public announcement. About noon on the day fixed, the people of the neighbourhood gather there. If there is any impediment in connexion with the bongas, they make a sacrifice; thereupon they catch fish with nets. Some people also catch with their hands; they start a tremendous noise; they enjoy themselves greatly. When they have done catching, they collect the small fish in the different nets, and if there are big fishes, they cut them into pieces; thereupon they collect half of the big fishes from every net, and all these the people of the village get. They make three portions of these. They give one portion to the owner of the ricefield pond or the dam, and two portions the people of the village divide among themselves. If the catching is in a river, the village headman of the boundary gets one portion, and if it is within the boundaries of two villages, the headmen of the two villages get one portion, divided into equal half-portions, and the remaining two portions the people of the two villages get. We have a special way of killing fish; this they call fish-poisoning. They bring different kinds of roots and stuff from the forest and crush this and throw it into the water. Then the fishes become intoxicated, and some of them die and float up. Then they are easily caught. The names of the poisons are: the root of the stemless Date, the fruit of corco, jloti grass, the bark of kumbiṛ, the bark of sạkṛi phọl, the fruit of lọṭọ, and others. This we call haṛ (fish-poison)[3]. 226 [824].

Concerning our every day catching of fish we act as follows: A couple of men invite each other to come along, and baling out the water in a ravine or the pool of a ricefield they catch the fish. During the rainy season we make weir-baskets and set them during the night in a ricefield or a river. Fishes are caught in this, and in the morning we shake them out and bring them.

[3] Of the poisons mentioned, the stemless Date is the Phoenix acaulis, Roxb.; corco is the Carcoria tomentosa, Roxb.; jloti is a grass growing in ricefields and moist places; kumbiṛ is Careya arborea, Roxb.; sạkṛi phọl is a tree, sometimes planted by the Pakarias; lọṭọ is Randia dumetorum, Lam.

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539 Next Thàkur Jiu ordered the lobster. He also failed. Then came the chance of the "Raghòp'-boar" (*whale*). He tried to bring earth on his back as well [825] as with the mouth. He was also unsuccessful, but as a sign of his efforts, his species have no scales on their backs even to-day.

The crab, summoned next, shared the fate of his predecessors.

Then the Earth-worm came forward. "O Thàkur Jiu," he said, "I can bring up the soil you ask for, if the tortoise stands still on water." The tortoise did as he was requested. He stood on the water with his legs chained.....The Earth-worm came down and reached the subsoil with his tail on the back of the tortoise. He began to eat the soil with his mouth and transmitted it through his hind portion. And thus earth stuck on the back of the tortoise. For a long time, the Earth-worm continued the operations and when he ceased, the earth was created.

At first, the surface was very uneven. Then Thàkur Jiu harrowed the earth. But even then many ridges remained. And they became the hills. The foam, floating on the water, next touched the earth. [824] On it he planted "sirom"[1] (*Andropogon Muricatus*) [412] plants with which broom-sticks are made.

1. Mayurbhanj Santals substituted *Karam* trees (a large forest tree, Adina cordifolia).

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[824]

plants with which broom-sticks are made. Grass grew next, and then a giant tree called "karam" (*Adina cordifolia*). Other trees like "asan" (*Terminalia Tomentosa*), "Sal" (*Shorea Robusta*) and "mohua" (*Bassia Latifolia*) followed, when the earth became strong enough.

Then Ṭhàkur Jiu separated the earth from water by placing hills along the shores and whenever water gushed in, he shut the inlets with rocks.

The birds "hàns hàńsil" were then made to perch on the cluster of "sirom" (*Andropogon Muricatus*) plants, where they built nests and laid eggs. And when they hatched the eggs, lo and behold! two human beings came out of them. One of them was a man, the other a woman. Then the birds sang: —

Hae hae, jalapurirè
Hae hae, nukin manewa
Hae hae, busàṇ akankin
Hae hae, nukin manewa
Hae hae, tokarè dòhòkin.
Hae hae, do sè làiaeben
Hae hae, maraṅ Ṭhàkur-Jiu
Hae hae, busàṇ akankin
Hae hae, nukin manewa
Hae hae, tokarè dòhòkin.

The sense of the above folk-song may be rendered as follows: —

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Here they cast aside many of the customs of their forefathers, but no explanation is forthcoming at this date as to why they did so. Henceforth, their customs resembled those of the Hindus more and more. We learn that in ancient times, the Santal forefathers did not burn their dead, nor did they carry the bones of the dead men to the Damodar river for being consigned in its holy water. Previously, they buried the dead men. But all these were changed here. In marriage, the Hindu custom of applying vermilion to the forehead of the bride was henceforth adopted.

Next, the early Santals came to Icàk' buṭà (under the shade of a tree named Icàk'). As the womenfolk crossed the bog and gathered under a *mòhua* tree they were struck with wonder to find that the lotus-leaves they had trodden under their feet and the marks of *arta* (equivalent to Hindu *alta*, a red pigment applied by the Hindu women to dye the sides of their feet) were absolutely undisturbed and intact. From this strange phenomenon they were convinced that they had done the right thing in changing the customs and resolved that they should henceforth stick to the changes.

The early Santals lived at Icàk' buṭà for a long time. But, as before, they migrated. The reasons are again uncertain, some ascribing it to the fear of the Turuks. As they were passing on, they found

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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calling "Ṭhàkur Jiu' as "Dhòròm". Nabin Mañjhi, Headman of Chamardahani, Muruda, explained that Dhòròm is the Creator of the world according to Santal belief. Being asked if the deity is worshipped at present by the Santals, he replied that Dhòròm is invoked during all marriage ceremonies with offerings of pure water and nothing else. Closely questioned as to whether the god had any shape or form, he answered that he had none and was 'nirakar' (*formless*). Secondly, the Santals of Muruda led by Nabin Mañjhi gave us some additional information as to how the first parents prepared the first drink. This was what they did. Gòṛòm baba asked them to grind grass-seeds and later directed them to bring the water from a fountain called *tatijhari*, by drinking which the monkeys became drunk as it washed the roots of a plant named *ràṇu ran*.[1] [A plant of the name exists in Mayurbhanj and is extensively used in the preparation of hàṇḍia (*rice-beer*)]. Then these two substances were mixed together to make the drink of the first parents. Thirdly, we have seen in the foregoing account that the Santals, while at Hihiri Pipiri were divided into seven clans and it is only after their migration from Sasañ beda that they

1. Ràṇu—The ferment used in the manufacture of rice-beer, Ran—drug (Dr. Campbell).

3r Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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cordifolia), Pipal (*Ficus religiosus, Willd*), Palas (*Butea frondosa*) lac-bearing Kusum (*Schleichera trijuga*) are the flora here to be seen in profusion.

Of these, the most predominant and characteristic tree to the Santal areas is the Sal, called *Sarjom* by them, and its distribution is general. It is a tree yielding a hard timber, straight and tall and shining with glossy leaves. It is holy with them, and with it they make their Jahèrthan, (*Holy Grove*). Such straggling clusters of Sal trees are found all over the countryside near Santal hamlets. The Sal serves them the same purpose as the bamboo to the rest of the population. With its leaves they make leaf-cups and plates and its timber invariably goes to their house-building. More useful is the Mohua. Its flower contains sugar and is therefore sweet to eat and nutritious too. The Santal preserves it as food by drying it in the sun and it serves them well for months to come. It serves the same purpose as the mango and the jack-fruit to the rest of the population, who during those seasons take them as their chief diet. The pulp of the fruit is eaten and its kernel yields an oil which is chiefly used by the tribe for their culinary purposes.

March and April are months of joy for the Santal like the Cherry-blossom season in Japan. The Mohua and Sal trees are then in full blossom with their whitish flowers. In the early morning one sees

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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In the early morning one sees the ground strewn with the flowers and the Santals carefully gather the mohua flowers in the baskets. The Pipal, with its gnarled roots and spreading branches serves as the resting place and meeting ground of the Santals, and the Palas with its yellowish blaze of colour dazzles the country-side in the wintry months of the year.[1]

Large tracts of forests are frequently found within the area, the abode of ferocious tigers, elephants, *sambar* deer, leopards, hyaenas, deer and wild-pigs. The marshes abound in wild-ducks, pigeons, geese, snipe and partridge.

In the summer months, the heat is intense and rises in places upto 120° degrees and dust-storms and "loo" (*heat-wave*) are the rules rather than the exception. The rain-fall compared to Bengal is very low but it is cold during the winter, the minimum record being on an average 40° degrees.

The area in Bengal that falls within our scope is a belt of irregular thickness and furnishes a gradual change from the plateau to the plains of Bengal in an undulation, interspersed with forest growths at places. Here, more specially in Bankura, small isolated hillocks and short ranges of low hills, form,

1. Ref. *Dt. Gazetteer*, Santal Parganas, Vol. XXII, pp. 16-17. It is however incorrectly stated therein that that the *Palas* is in blossom in the hot season of the year, for it is only peculiar to the winter.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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smile, "O, there are the "Boṅgas" (*evil-spirits, deities*)." Thus finishes the daily routine of their lives.

The annual round of their life is a string of agricultural activities, working as day-labourers when there is no work to do at home, tribal feasts at the Holy-grove of the village or at the house of the Headman or other villagers, ceremonial hunts as during the "Baha" (*Flower-festival*), dances enmasse during the tribal festivities or at moon-lit nights and fish-gathering on a quest of joy and food combined.

And in between, if there is any leisure time they spend it in gathering fruit, making nets and in occasional hunts to the neighbouring forests and indulge in the delights of the chase of their primitive semi-hunting life.

Santal Cottages

Typical Santal cottages almost invariably stand on both sides of a straggling "kulhi," (*village lane*) where pigs squeal and fowls flutter about.

Each cottage is a two or three-roomed affair. On the floor corn is strewn for being aired. The plinth made of mud, rises one to three cubits high, the average being a cubit and half. It is beautifully blackened with a dye made of burnt straw plastered with cow-dung. The walls of the houses are made of bamboos or "ṣal" logs and are generally plastered

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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342 over with a thick coat of mud on both sides. The
• 824 wooden posts which go to make the frame of the roof are of "pòlas" (*Butea frondosa*) and "asan" (*Terminalia Tomentosa*) trees. The main rafters are made of solid "sal" (*Shorea Robusta*, Gaertn) planks, the roof is supported on *Sal* posts, and thatching grass (generally stalks of paddy) is laid two to three
342 inches in thickness. There is, of course, a good deal of variation in the construction of these according to the financial position of the house-holder ; and in Andharia, Mayurbhanj, we were shown a house belonging to Dalpat Màrndi, a well-to-do Santal, constructed absolutely on a novel plan. The cottage did away with all beams and rafters as one sees in an ordinary cottage. There were no supporting posts to the walls, the triangular frame of the roof rested alone on two "sal" rafters placed on both sides near the end.

As regards the dimensions of Santal houses, we noticed some variations. The usual variety in Mayurbhanj is called "egara panchi" (*eleven by five cubits*). Others are 'bara panchi' (*twelve by five cubits*) and "tera panchi" (*thirteen by five cubits*). The richer people have "sat satara" sizes (*seventeen by seven*). But in no case, can the Santals have cottages measuring six by seven cubits. It is considered inauspicious to construct such houses, but no magic could be traced at the bottom of such ideas.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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The second household article that strikes one's attention is the "Baka," (See illustration) the Santal gourd-vessel, which is made to serve as spoons and ladles by being cut into different sizes. Various kinds of vessels and plates generally of "sal"-leaves called "katkom," and "kholka" are made by stitching them with small sticks like pins or by minute splinters of bamboo. (See illustrations). We saw these things in the house of Basu Hansdak' Prodhan of Asanjora, Mayurbhanj, being used for plates for food. The leaf-industry has reached a sort of perfection in the hands of the Santal in his struggle for existence and we saw even waterproofs for rains were made of them. They are called "Ghungu" and made of the leaves of "Siyari" (*Oriya*) trees, called "Jamlar Sakam," by the Santals.

Baka (Gourd-vessel)

Santal water-proof (Ghungu)

Leaf-plate

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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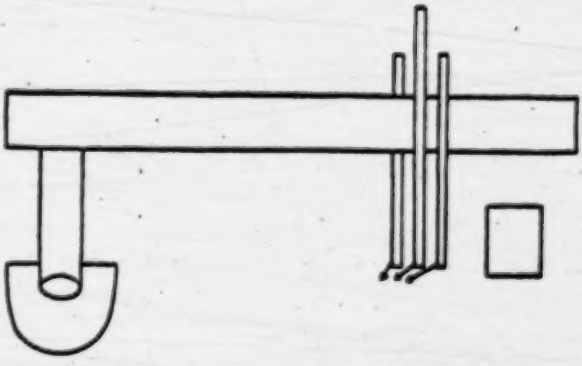
[824]

For husking paddy, they use a mortar hollowed out of a huge log of "sal." Paddy is husked in this implement with the help of a wooden pestle called "tuk" by being wielded by the hands at the butt-end. The Santali *dheñki* (*husking implement*) is of the sort one

Ukhur

Tuk

Sal-wood



Sal Hole in the earth

[824] meets with in Hindu households. They are made of sal-wood ; only they look a bit crude. (See illustrations).

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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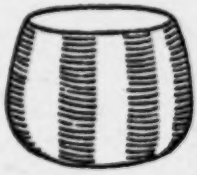
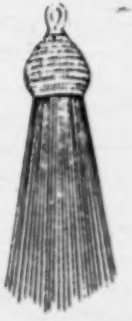
Baskets of different shapes and sizes, made of bamboos arrest one's attention in a Santal household. One of them, called "uduli," is used by women while marketing and carrying things to the field. (See illustration). They have their own winnowing fan called "hata" and use a basket named "gauni" for measuring paddy. The broom-sticks are neatly made of "kancho" (*Oriya*) reeds (Santali, *Kharang*). (See illustration).



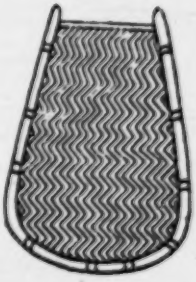
Uduli

[243]
[804]

412
824



Jana



Hata

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Industries

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As far as cottage-industries are concerned, we did not find spinning and weaving a part of the serious programme of the Santals, as they depend on the neighbouring Hindu weavers to supply their clothes. However, in most houses, they possess these wheels and the indigenous ginning machine, which implies,

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3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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688 regards the breach of social taboos, there are various
783 methods of ceremonial purification. Thus the woman who gets upon a thatch must undergo penance by passing under it, while a mixture of cow-dung in water is poured above the thatch.

If they take rice from *Hadis*, Weavers, *Ghasis*, *Doms* and such lower caste Hindus, they have to undergo a penance, being summoned by the village Headman and the "Mòṇṛèn hòṛ".

[305] The *modus operandi* of the purification requires the offender to go to *ṭòl-ghàt* (bathing ghat) where a Santal barber shaves him on receipt of Re 1-4 ans., as his fee, together with a piece of cloth and a bowl. Next, he is taken to the water and forced to take a ceremonial ablution. The village elders now sink
• [824] a twig of a Pipal (Santali, *Hesak'*, a species of fig, *Ficus Religiosa*, Willd) tree on the mud near the bank ; the barber takes the offender out of the water, while the elders shout *haribol* thrice. Thereafter, water made holy with the touch of *tulsi* leaves, is sprinkled over the delinquent ; and he is tied by the hand to the *Pipal* branch sevenfold by means of a string, amidst a second shout of *haribol*. Now they extricate him out of the knots and give him a brass-coin, a leaf of a *tulsi* plant and some cow-dung to eat, and later take him to the end of the village where the gods *Jahèr era*, Mòṇṛenko, *Atupat* and *Pirpat* are ceremonially worshipped.

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One scrutinising the attendant marriage ceremonials must be struck by the fact that many of them aim at the union of the souls of the married couple along with their physical bodies. The tying of the ends of the cloths worn by the husband and the wife and their eating together, are instances on the point. Something more than this is sought after to ensure the steadfast obedience of the wife to the husband when the former eats a meal soaked in the water with which her husband's feet have been washed.

The same anxiety for the future welfare of the married couple is revealed in processes to guard the luck, and to exclude the evil omens, as by the beneficent and luck-conferring virtues of the mango-twigs in a water-pot. And we must not forget that omen-reading is the first essential of all Santal marriages. In this respect, they go so far as to marry the parties to dogs or trees to do away with the supposed evil effects of their teeth having appeared earlier in the upper gum. Nor must we overlook the fact that the married couple not only belong to each other but to the wider life of the clan and the tribe. This communion of the bride with her husband's people is ensured by the girl offering rice-beer and tooth-sticks to the bridegroom's party. And by ceremonial baths and anointing the body with turmeric paste, the Santals

3i Mukherjea O, Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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764 thrice and placed on it. A fowl is sacrificed by
[782] means of a twig of a *mòhua* tree passed through its
[824] eyes, and hung on one of the posts round the pyre.[1] Three *mòhua*-twigs are then placed by any one of the village, one on the breast, one on the navel and the third on the waist of the dead body. His teeth are brushed with a tooth-stick of *sal*-wood, and some lime and tobacco applied to the mouth. And after all these preliminaries, the son of the deceased sets fire to the body, by lighting the straw of the thatch taken from the house of the deceased. The members of the tribe present throw some fuel each on the pile on fire as their ceremonial duty on behalf of the clan. In case, the deceased has no son, the right of applying fire descends in this order, (1) father (2) brother (3) agnates (4) men of the clan. The
[562] wife can never apply fire, as she never accompanies the funeral.

764 Now, as the body is half-burnt, two men are
782 deputed to the house of the deceased to gather some
824 *sal* tooth-sticks, some leaves of *kaima* tree, some roots of *bena* plant (a common grass found near tanks, *Andropogon muricatus*) and some fish, where they cook three handfuls of rice and a meat-curry with

1. Dr. Campbell calls it *Bulau* (a method of exorcism), page 87. *Santali to English Dictionary*.

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[782]
[824]

fish added, to be offered to the gods at the cross-road.

On the conclusion of the cremation, water is poured on the pyre, first by the man who sets fire to the body, next by the pall-bearers and lastly by all the members of the tribe present. A bone from the forehead of the deceased is now gathered and kept inside the earthen pot, specially carried for the purpose, and buried under the earth near a *sal*-tree. This practice is uniform throughout Mayurbhanj and Santal Parganas. The funeral party now returns home after bathing themselves and crunching *dhup* (incense).

[184]

Now it is time for the meal already cooked at home to be carried to the cross-road, where, near a cottage specially built for the purpose, it is offered to *Maran Burn* (the chief presiding deity) and the spirit of the deceased. After this propitiation, the improvised hut is burnt down, and the party returns home. Custom requires that the head of the household and his wife should partake of the remnant of the offerings along with the villagers, and thereafter, some men will fall in a trance (*jhupar*) and impersonate *Maran Burn* and the deceased, who are closely questioned as regards the death. Then an uncanny conversation proceeds for a time about the world of spirits.

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A sample of the questions and answers may

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the new corn with a similar prayer. The remainder of the millet, he takes home for himself. 796 793 243 782

The Millet Festival, called *Muchri*, exists in all its details in Mayurbhanj and is observed by the Santals there. [184]

Gamah Purnima (August)

Side by side with these harvest-festivals, the Santals of Mayurbhanj observe *Gamah Purnima* on the full-moon of *Sravan* (August), when cows are fed with salt, *mohua* flowers, rice, the corrosive *bhela* fruit and a grass called *mutha*, their horns being copiously rubbed with oil. Thereafter, men and women dance round a Karam (*Adina Cordifolia*) branch, planted at the *akhra* (place for dance), a special *Karam* dance, and on the conclusion immerse it in water. Ancestors are also propitiated with offerings of rice-beer. The Santals observe the festival along with some of the Hindus. All wear new clothes and indulge in feasts and drinks, not forgetting to feed Brahmins and Vaishnavas. 796 [535] [769] [171]

Karam Pòròb (September-October)

This is a festival observed in September-October. The males of the village go after nightfall and cut a branch of a *Karam* tree (*Adina Cordifolia*,) which they fix in the village lane (*kulhi*) and round which the young people dance till morning, when the Karam branch is thrown into a tank. 796 [824] [535]

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Magh Sim[1] *(January-February)*

The month of *Magh* (Jan.-Feb.) is the end of the Santal year and it has got appropriate ceremonials with the cutting of jungle thatching grass. Servants are paid their wages and fresh contracts entered into. All village officials resign, *rayats* notify throwing up of lands and are reappointed amidst drinks of rice-beer[2]

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Baha, the Santal 'Sal'-Blossom Festival.[3]

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Towards the latter part of February, the Santals celebrate *Baha*, their *sal*-blossom season, an occasion for wholesale tribal rejoicing with sprinkling of water, its special songs and dances.

According to *Hòṛkorèn Mare Hapramko Reak' Katha*, the Traditions and Institutions of the Santals, the aim of the festival is to celebrate the advent of Spring, which sees the efflorescence of their favourite *sal*, (Shorea Robusta), *pòlas* (Butea Frondosa), *mohua* (Bassia latifolia), *icak'* (Woodfordia Floribunda, Salib.) flowers. So long *Baha* is not over, no Santal will suck the honey of these flowers or eat them, nor will their women wear them in their hair.

1 Mayurbhanj Santals name it *Magh-Sim*, meaning a worship in the month of Magh, as distinct from *Mage-Sim* of the Muṇḍàs.

2 Ref. Risley, *People of India*, App. Viii. clxvi.

3 Quoted from the author's article in the *Modern Review*, May 1936.

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the branches with the flower, while Jahèr era plucks them in his basket. Then, they all return to the holy-grove, also gathering *mohua* (Bassia Latifolia) flowers on the way, where the priest receives them with a load of *sal*-flowers in a chequered napkin. The actor-deities are then enshrined in their respective huts. Fowls are sacrificed in their honour with a special incantation in honour of Baha and amidst songs and rejoicings, the priest offers the deities bunches of *sal* and *mohua* flowers. Then, after a mutual feet-washing ceremony, in which Jahèr era takes the lead, the balance of the water is sprinkled on them. Then there are shouts and yells when the deities are transformed into their real selves.

All then return to the village singing and dancing. The burden of these particular songs is that of an invitation to all the boys and the girls of the village to accept the special gift of a *sal*-flower from the priest, and to salute him in return. At night, the priest remains at the grove with his wife, who shares with him a special dish of a spotted fowl, cooked by her husband.

The third day, which symbolises the return home, is devoted to general feasting and merry-making. Some go to the *Jahèrthan* (grove), beat the kettle-drum and blow horns, indicating that the priest is returning home. All then tell one another, "Let us go and welcome the priest," and march to

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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(Translation)

831 The girl sings:—
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The shade of the tree has changed to afternoon.
The sheaves of leaves have withered too.
In sooth I say, leave the skirt of my *sari*,
The inmates of the house have come to know of it.

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Love of Flowers and Birds

Nature with her wealth of beauties appeals very strongly to all primitive people and naturally enough, we find a large number of Santal folk-songs dealing with the flowers and leaves. Here is a Santal maiden enamoured of *natal* flowers which she will pluck at all costs and wear in her hair:—

Bururе *natal* baha
Dolop' dolop' *natal* baha
Janhan lekatchoniñ tiok'geya
Hòriñ chipirehon sut'do kòcerehon
Janhanlikarehoñ bahae geya.

(Translation)

On the hills are *natal* flowers,
The (luxuriant) *natal* flowers are dancing (in the wind).
I must pluck them by any means.
Although I am not so beautiful,

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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And the knot of my hair sways side-ways;
However I may look, I must stick them in my hair. [301]

In the following song, a Santal is wailing for the loss of his garden of flowers:—

Nadika dhare dhare amakar bagan Raghu fulakar bagan.
Fulakar bagan Raghu basate marilò.
Amakar bagan Raghu, hure marilò.

(Translation)

By the side of the river is my garden, O Raghu!
The garden of flowers has been despoiled by the wind, O Raghu!
My garden of flowers, O Raghu, has been blasted by the hail.

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Flowers in bloom have the strongest appeal to the Santals, more specially to their women-folk. It is a common refrain heard in the Santal Parganas "*Biti kande campa lagi, beta kande dhuti lagi*" (the daughter weeps for the Campa flower and the son for the cloth). Here is a party who would request the gardener for the *berdòr* flowers:—

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Marañ buru còṭre
Berdòr bahado jèṅgèt' jèṅget'.

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Malinañ mètaya baha lañ kòyèya
Berdoṛ bahado jèñgèt' jèñgèt.'

(Translation)

On the peak of the big hill,
Berdor flower looks deep red.
We shall ask the gardener for the flower.
Berdor flower looks deep red.

The next refers to the *towa* flowers:

Marañ buru còṛre towa bahako hese
Keda, niñlagit' do gochate nagueme,
Niñ karamḍàr lagit' dàhṛi lòṭòm.

(Translation)

A woman sings:—

On the big hill, the branches of *towa* flowers have been lopped off.
Bring the flowers for me tying them in the skirt of your cloth,
And for my flower-friend, bring them under your turban (so that none can see).

It is in an appropriate setting of natural beauties that shine in beauty:—

Kaira bali bhitàre
Gach dip dip kòre
Didi pat liplip kòre
Dara hara ghòrer bhitàre
Didi tiri liklik kòre.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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(Translation)

In the plantain garden
The plant glimmers;
O sister, the leaves quiver and quiver.
In a splendid mansion-like house,
The wife shines in her beauty.

Songs of Birds

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If the Santal folk-tales are replete with references to animals, the folk-songs have their share of the Santal's affection for birds. The following verse refers to white-paddy birds:—

Bandale bandale nàtiñ àkin bankdò
Bandale bandale pòsaò àkin beralidò;
Tòkoeraca natiñ àkin bankdò
Cuna raca natiñ àkin bankdò
Cuna raca pòsad àkin beralidò

(Translation)

In every *bundh*, a pair of white paddy birds peck food.
In every *bundh*, a pair of birds get plump by food.
In whose court-yard do the pair of white paddy-birds peck food?,
In whose court-yard do the pair of birds get plump?,

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224 782 trouble or games may not be at all available. Should such misfortunes befall the tribe, a *Jhumpar* takes place in which the village deities and *Buru Boṅga* are invoked and represented by the hunters. Sal-
[824] leaves are woven to represent winnowing-fans. Leaves of *meral* (A small tree, *Phyllanthus Emblica*, Linn.) are substituted for sun-dried rice and rubbed on the
224 winnowing-fan. Three men fall in a hypnotic trance
782 and impersonate Maraṅ Buru, Jahèrera and Mòṇṛèn-
787 ko. The fourth, Buru Boṅga, remains at a distance. These gods are asked for the reasons of the calamities, invoked to suggest remedies to get rid of the trouble, whereupon, the appropriate answers are received.

224 The night of the Gipitic is spent by the Santals with a great deal of mirth and hilarity. Music, dance and feasts go on till sun-rise. The songs sung on the occasion are called Bir seren and several of them have been quoted in the appendix on sex-life. It will appear therefrom that they are of an erotic nature and we gathered that the prevailing atmosphere becomes too much to be stood by the women who assemble to sell rice-beer and they fly from the
[535] spot. Men dance the *Doṅger*, a dance meant for men only.

224 787 *Customs and Beliefs connected with Hunting*

While out for hunting, if the Santals see a pitcher full of water within the boundary of the village,

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Manjhi Haram's (headman) house. On it taxes are collected by the Manjhi Haram and legal disputes are settled. There is no fixed size for the Majhisthan. It is found that the Santals, in different villages make Majhisthans of different dimensions. In a village there was a Majhisthan ten feet long, eight feet broad and two and half feet in height while in another was one five feet long, four feet broad and one foot high. It consists of a raised mud mound over which a neatly thatched roof is constructed. The roof is supported by five upright wooden posts in the four corners of the Majhisthan and one in the centre. At the base of the centre post is stuck a small stone or wooden lump (sometimes shaped as a human head) daubed with vermilion. From the roof an earthen pot is suspended containing water brought from the Jahirsthan for the spirits to drink and beside it hangs a peacock's head. The floor of the Majhisthan is plastered with mud and cowdung.

The Jahirsthan (Sacred Grove): The Jahirsthan is a place where religious ceremonies of the village are performed by the Santals. It is situated at the end of the village and it must be within the boundary of the village. A cluster of sal trees about twenty to twenty-five in number is always required. Among these trees three are essential, and at the foot of each of these three trees a stone is put representing the deities, Jaherera, Turukomonrako, Marang-Buru. The fourth one is an Ashan tree which grows near these three sal trees and at the foot of this tree a stone representing the deity Pargana-bonga is kept. The fifth and the last one is a Mowa tree, which stands a little apart, and at the foot of this tree, a stone is placed to represent

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778 824 Gosainera, a female deity. This Mowa tree is known as the Lady of the Grove. But it was noticed in the Jahirsthan both in Dumka and Godda area, that at the base of several other Sal trees there were stones which represented the Pukri and other Bongas.

342 787 825 [782] **The House:** Before constructing the house they test the site by tying a rooster on the site for five days, and if within these five days the cock loses its life they give up the place thinking it to be undesirable. If the rooster remains alive they begin the construction of the house after sacrificing a fowl to Marang Buru.

342 782 Before entering the new house the owner of the house brings a mug of water after bathing in a stream nearby and pours a little water in each room. In the room facing east the owner puts three cups of Sal leaves on the floor and pours "Handi" (rice beer) in those cups taking the name of Marang Buru and Pilchu Haram and utters the following words :—

"I have constructed the house by taking your names. See that every thing remains alright".

342 [351] [245] [784] Mango and jackfruit trees are planted in the adjoining field in the belief that prosperity will come. During the house ceremony widows and divorced women cannot enter the house.

The house and its contents: The house of the Santals is not of varied design and the plan of the main structure is always the same. In some can be found a courtyard in the centre, and rooms on two sides and mud walls on the other two sides. An average house of the Santals measures 15 to 18 feet in the length and 10 to 12 feet in width.

In the Daminikoh area and outside this area of the Santal Parganas two types of houses can be seen.

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One of which the Santals call 'bangla orak' i.e. gable house. It is rectangular in form and is generally about 14 to 15 feet in length and 9 to 10 feet in breadth. The roof of this type is two sided. The other type of house is called by them 'Katom orak' i.e. umbrella house. In this house the roof is four sided. 342

The most common type of house the Santals build is the gable house. In constructing this house nine big posts are required, which are either got from the plot where they construct the house or are purchased. These nine posts are sunk in the ground in three rows, each row consisting of three posts. The middle one they fix a little longer than those of the two sides. Horizontally on the posts of the three rows, three big heavy beams are placed. Three cross beams are then fixed on both sides. These cross beams are tied with the middle and side posts. Then a number of rafters are tied over the cross beams. A frame work of split-bamboo is then fixed over it. For roofing, they generally use paddy straw or a special type of grass. This they get in abundance in the forest, and it is stronger and more durable than paddy straw. On the sides of each house is a platform measuring two to two and a half feet in width and the length is equal to that of the room. The floor of the rooms and the platforms are made of beaten earth whereas the walls are made by placing branches between the post and plastering it with earth and cowdung, their thickness being about 18 inches. They apply a plaster of earth on the wall, and three feet from the floor, they smear a very dark grey wash which is prepared by mixing cowdung with straw ash. There is only one door in each room and no other 342 335 342 [824] [237] [824]

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HUNTING

Hunting:—In hunting the Santals are particularly 224
expert. Nothing pleases them so much as to be out after game with bows and arrows. As soon as they come to know that a party is out for hunting they give up their work and join the party. Hunting was one of the earliest methods of the Santals for the search of food. As except the reserved forests, the real forests [137] have mostly disappeared, so game which they get by hunting is extremely poor. Consequently they are now compelled to adopt agriculture as their main source for collecting food. Still they celebrate the annual 224 796 793 hunting (Dehri hunting) excursion of a magico-religious nature. The Dehri hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals, takes place once a year [221] in the month of Falgun (February and March). Dehri, [824] their hunting priest carries a big branch of a Sal-tree (shorea robusta) with leaves and goes to the market, where people seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting just after the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The Dehri is responsible for the 224 hunt, i. e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By 796 divination he finds out as to who are threatened by 793 any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn 782 back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for [787] them to Sin-Bonga to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to bongas

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One of the strips protrudes, which serves as a handle. They hold the net in the water of a shallow stream and walk up stream, after a little distance, they raise it and catch the fish. In the other type, the net is tied in a circular bamboo frame—the Santals call it 'Kabhi-Jal'. They also use bow and arrow in catching fish. The arrow head here is furnished with three heads. Fishing hook is used to catch fish now-a-days.

The locality where the women catch fish is either below or between the rice-fields where there is standing water. In such places the Santals catch fish in the following way. The water is first laved out sufficiently to make it possible to reach the bottom with one's hand. They go into the water and move about to stir up the mud. The fish becomes confused and numb in the slushy water and are easily caught with the hand.

Catching fish by poisoning is not unknown to the Santals. The poison used for this purpose is got from the roots and bark of certain trees[1]. They powder them and throw them into the stagnant water of either pond or into a certain part of a stream, the fish are drugged and after some time they float on the surface and are caught.

Like hunting, the Santals have communal fishing in which people from neighbouring villages take part. The headman of the village, inside the boundary of which they want to catch fish, announces the date by a branch of a tree with leaves. On the appointed day they gather and after propitiating the bongas with fowls, they start for fishing.

1. Rev. Bodding collected the names of the trees which are as follows :- The roots of 'Kita' (Phoenix acaulis Roxb.). The bark of 'Kumbi' (Careya arborea Roxb.). The bark of a tree called 'Sakri Phal'.

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contains knots. Now, if the father of the bride agrees, he sends the same number of knots on another string to the bridegroom's father by the Raibar, but if he wants to have his daughter's marriage earlier or later he sends more or less knots on the string as the case may be.

Mandwa Ceremony: Then comes the Mandwa ceremony which may takes place on the marriage day or one or two days earlier. This ceremony is performed in the same manner in both bride's and bridegroom's houses. For this they build a temporary shed in the centre of the courtyard. This is a rectangular shed with a strong central post which is called *Mandwa-Khunti*. This shed is erected by the young men of the village who are known as *Mandwa Kora*. *Pachawes* and boiled rice are given to those young men both at the time of building and at the time of removing it after marriage. In the centre of the shed a branch of the Mahua tree (Madhuca latifolia Roxb) is planted and young maiden of the village keep five roots of turmeric, five paddy-grains and five pice in a hole which is dug by the unmarried youngmen[1]. The Jogmanjhi brings five Kumaris (unmarried girls) to rub oil on the following persons within the Mandwa shed in the following order: Naike and his wife, Kudam naike and his wife, the headman and his wife, the Paramanik and his wife the Jogmanjhi and his wife, the parents of the bride and bridegroom, as the case may be. Last of all, in the hands of villagers who may be present there only mustard oil and turmeric is given.

[1] This has some magical significance. The rice and turmeric roots show any sign of sprouting then, the married life will be happy and never has any difficulty in married life.

[2 Erratum: i.e., "take." 3 Erratum: i.e., "maidens." -- Analyst]

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way : the husband is made to stand facing the sun on one leg (generally the left). He has a cloth round his neck each end of which is held in the hand along with three sal leaves. Then taking the name of Sin-Bonga he tears the sal leaves in token of separation and upsets a brass pot full of water. This is repeated by the wife also.[1]

Birth and Naming Ceremony : When the Santal woman becomes pregnant, she and her husband observe certain taboos. The husband during his wife's pregnancy never kills any animal, nor participates in any funeral ceremony and does not come in contact with any dead body. The pregnant woman during the evening very rarely comes out of the house, she never crosses any streamlet, she does not weep when any death occurs of her relations. On the day of the moon-eclipse she does not come out of the room. She should not sit on the verandah with her hair or her cloth hanging down on the courtyard side. All these taboos signify that the Santals have a strong belief that malevolent spirits or witches do mischief to the pregnant women.

The Santals believe that after ten months the women give birth. When the labour pain starts the pregnant woman is confined in a room, which is generally a corner of the house or a portion of the verandah partitioned with bamboo and leaves. At birth, an experienced elderly woman of the village or of the adjoining village officiates as midwife. No one is allowed to remain there except one or two female relatives of the pregnant woman. After birth, the umbilical cord is

[1]There is a belief that if the sal leaves are not fully torn or the lota not wholly emptied then the couple must again come together.

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597 of the boy renounce him and declare him henceforth to belong to the new father; it is also declared that the boy shall have no right of inheritance in the property of his natural father. When all this has been done the adopting father fixes a date for the formal adoption of the boy. The villagers of that village on that day behave as at Janam Chhatiar (name-giving ceremony of the Santal child). They shave and drink handi (rice beer). The usual procedure in a Janam Chhatiar is that the officiating midwife tells the assembled people the name of the new-born child; here she does not tell the name of the boy but the sept or sub-sept of the adopting father; henceforth that becomes the sept of the boy. Thereupon they leave the boy to eat the flesh of animals sacrificed to the tribal deities. Henceforward the boy becomes their own.

684 627 **Bitlaha**: It means to outcast a Santal from society. This outcasting takes place by the order of the assembled members of the Panchayat. It is resorted to when a Santal woman indulges in sexual intercourse with either a diku (non-Santal) or with a person of the same sept. If any one commits such an offence the headman of the village in question calls his neighbouring colleagues together and informs them of the matter; if the people hold that the case is not proven, then those who started the rumour are severely punished. If it is proved, the assembly gives an order for outcasting and they proceed to carry it out the day after the annual hunt. The date of this Bitlaha is announced by a man in the market who carries a branch of a Sal tree (Shorea robusta) with leaves. The people in the market on seeing him understand the matter and count the leaves

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[211]
[824]
[114]

of the branch (each leaf of the branch means a day) because as many leaves as it contains so many days afterwards this bitlaha is to take place. During this operation the Parganait of that bunglow and even the Sub-divisional officer of that district are generally commissioned to superintend so that nothing untoward happens. One such outcasting I saw personally about two years ago at Dumka within the Santal Pargana.

In the early morning of the appointed day the bachelors and other male members of the neighbouring villages with flutes, drums, bows and arrows meet at the end of the village street where the culorit lives. The bachelors compose extempore obscene songs in which he is mentioned by name. Drumming is kept up so terribly that the sound can be heard for miles around. At a sign from the leader the crowd with wild yells and lifted hands holding bows rushes towards the village, drumming and blowing their flutes loudly and singing obscene songs. The women of that village do not remain there; they go away to some other place to keep their prestige.

When the crowd reaches the house of the offender they tie a short charred bit of firewood, a worn-out broom and some used leaf-plates on a long pole of bamboo and fix it at the entrance to the courtyard. Within the courtyard they break the fireplace and all things and even sometimes break the house. Young men in undress desecrate the rooms.

The persons outcasted are not allowed to take food with others, they cannot give their children in marriage within the Santal community. The parents of both sides also would be outcasted, and those who give shelter to these outcasts will be treated like-wise.

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757
177 witches. But the majority comprises of herbs
174 and sometimes also minerals, leading one to suspect strongly the influence of Hindu indigeneous Kaviraji treatment which had been universally adopted (ancient Hindu medicinal treatises having been translated into Arabic and passed through it into mediaeval European pharmacopoeia). Thus for instance the use of Rasa-Sindur is distinctly Hindu, the word Rasa being the old Hindu word for a form of preparation of mercury. Similarly, some names such as Kababchini or tobacco-water show post-Mahomedan adoption.

796
278
824 It may be mentioned here that there is a seasonal ceremonial called Ranjagao for the vitalising or blessing of medicinal plants in general, at the time of the autumnal Dasai parab. This has no reference to any special ingredients but increases the effectiveness of medicine in general. There are certain instructions given as to the time and mode.

757 The method of diagnosis, generally followed, is by feeling the pulse as amongst the Hindu Kavirajes.

(b) **Tejo Theory**

[759]
753 The Santal calls in the Rarantic for diseases due to natural causes. But he also has a theory of disease which in his scientific viewpoint is as natural a cause as infection caused by bacteria. But we can look upon it as an agency which is natural and yet supernatural and sometimes also diffused with human agency. According to them diseases would be caused by a tejo which may be large or very miscroscopic. These tejos are located in different parts of the body, some at the root of the nose and some in different parts of the body.

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courtyard there is an elevated place, square, or rectangular, the size generally being 1½'×1½'×1'. It is made of earth, and a *Tulsi* (Ocymum Sanctum L.) plant is planted in the centre of the mound over which a shed is erected. The shed is so large that it can easily accommodate 10 to 12 persons. The shed is erected by the unmarried disciples, married ones have nothing to do with the erection of the shed. The posts of this shed are of sal wood. In the centre of the shed a hen's egg and a chir sakom (a thin kind of iron wristlet or arm ornament) are kept for preventing witches from molesting them. The course lasts for four months. A woman cannot be an *ojha*. The first act of the *ojha* is what is called *Akhra rara* which means performing the opening ceremony, to ensure that all may go well and without any hindrance. The first evening the disciples bring along with them some *sindur* which is given to the *guru*. In five different places in the courtyard the *ojha* makes vermilion marks in the name of the following five different *bongas* :—

(1) Kamru guru (the reputed first teacher of *ojha* science to the Santals),

(2) Sin *Bonga* (the sun),

(3) Kali mai (the goddess Durga),[1]

(4) Dibi mai (the goddess Durga),

(5) Ganga mai (the Ganges goddess).

The following invocation is offered to all of them by him after changing the names of the *Bongas* :

"Nokoe, Kamru guru (or, as the case may be, Serma Sin Thakur, etc.) amintikawam kana; nokoe cela korako

1 [Erratum: this should read "(the goddess Kali)."
^ Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x - Analyst]

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for his final touch. The *ojha* agrees if he thinks that he may be able to work independently. The *ojha* then demands the following things for the function : A new loin cloth, a goat, a pair of pigeons and some fowls and one to five rupees. 756

When the disciple makes these things ready the *ojha* with his wife goes to the house of the disciple and gives the *sid* there. The *guru* and *chela* first go and bathe. Coming back they clean some place in the courtyard with cowdung and the *ojha* here puts down a few small handfuls of *adwa* rice and makes some vermilion marks at each small heap of *adwa* rice (the number of heaps vary according to the number of sacrifices to be made). The loin cloth is then spread in the courtyard, the *ojha* takes his seat on it and performs the sacrifices ; the *chela* holds the goats, the fowls and the pigeons whilst the *guru* beheads them. In one of the corners of the loin cloth the money to be given to the *guru* is tied up and when the sacrifices are performed he takes the cloth and money. [782]

Sunum *bonga* or divination by oil and leaves : By this means the Santal *ojha* finds out the final cause or origin of disease and death. The *ojha* demands the following things from the person who engages the *ojha* ; 755

(1) Sal tree leaves (Shorea robusta, Gurtu). [824].

(2) Mustard oil.

(3) A little water.

The *ojha* then squats down and jerks his head a couple of times and then he dips the index-finger of the right hand in the mustard oil and sprinkles a few drops towards the sun and then he draws a mark of oil with

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755 the same finger on the earth. The *ojha* then takes a sal leaf and looks intensely over it and then takes another look over it in the similar way. A sal leaf has a number of veins which divide the surface into several compartments. In different places on the surface of a leaf the *ojha* drops oil with the index or middle finger of the right hand uttering at the same time what each oil mark is to stand for, viz., the supposed possible cause or origin of the patient's disease. The Santals believe that one of the following causes brings disease, death and misery:

(1) Natural causes,
(2) Human beings,
(3) *Bongas*, and
(4) The spirits of ancestors.

The *ojha* in the above way puts marks here and there on the leaf, at the same time muttering to himself that this is for such and that for such, and a third for something else, and so on, whereupon he commences to rub each mark in with his finger. Whilst rubbing, the *ojha* mutters some *Mantras*. The Santal *ojha* uses different names for oils and leaves in the *Mantra*; if the particular kind used is not mentioned in the *Mantra* the magic would be spoilt.

"Tarik" or Detection of Disease by Sirom Broom: The Santal *Ojha* draws a number of squares side by side on the earth with a twig or handle of a Sirom broom. At first three long lines are drawn parallel to one another on the ground and then a number of short lines are drawn across the above three lines, thus getting a figure with the help of a number of squares. The *ojha* then

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796 782 animals is eaten by the men. The only woman who gets a share is the wife of the priest. Drinking, dancing and singing are followed by young men and women of the village.

796 614 [184] **Jom Sim:** The *Jom Sim* is performed with many quaint ceremonies which differ somewhat for the different clans. That is why it is called clan festival. Mr. Culshaw recorded some stories from which it can be ascertained how it is connected with clan. "The 614 796 539 Karwak Hasdak tell the story of how long ago their ancestors were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and all the Hasdak were present. They had performed the sacrifices and everyone had been served with rice and meat, but some of the younger folk present felt that they had not been given enough to eat, so they killed a buffalo, or kada, became known as Karwar Hasdak". The Soren Santal relate "that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare [179] the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as poita Soren".[1]

796 614 174 It is probably the oldest sacrifice the Santal have because it has more aboriginal features in it than any other sacrifice of theirs.

724 793 [221] [182] [211] **Dihri Hunting:** The *Dihri* hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals which takes place once a year in the month of Falgun (February and March). *Dihri*, their hunting priest carries a big branch of a *Sal* tree with leaves and goes to the market, where people

[1] W.J. Culshaw—Tribal heritage. 1949. pp. 74 and 78.

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seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting after just the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The *Dihri* is responsible for the hunt, i.e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By divination he finds out as to who are threatened by any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for them to *Sin Bonga* to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to *bongas* of the forest where the hunt is to be held, to ensure success and safety in the following way:

The *Dihri* enters the forest and being naked, pricks his whole body except the joints, with the thorn of a bush. He then draws a small circle on the ground with powdered rice and puts some adwa rice mixed with the blood which comes out from his body and makes a vermilion mark inside the circle. The *Dihri* then gives a little rice to all the forest *bongas*. Others who are following him, then enter the forest with bows and arrows.

Mag-Sim: The Santals perform this festival in the month of Magh (January-February) when the jungle grass is mown; fowls are sacrificed to all the *bongas* by the village priest and his assistant. This festival marks the end of the Santal year. All the village officials go through the form of resigning their offices and the cultivators give up their lands. After a week the headman of the village says before all the villagers that he has changed his mind and would like to continue in the

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different kinds of rice fields are Bengali. Maize, a cereal that is important in their economy, has a borrowed name, but other lesser cereals retain their Santali names. In Bankura the Santals have lost the use of their own numerals beyond seven, though apparently these are known and commonly used elsewhere. Even so, in Bankura the Santal word for "twelve" is still used in phrases connected with the recital of tribal traditions, as in the phrase *gelbar paris*, meaning the "twelve clans". Iron has a Santali name, but other metals now in use, such as lead, copper and brass, have Bengali names. In addition to brass and earthenware utensils, the Santals make extensive use of the leaves of the *sal* tree (Santali *sarjom*), which they plait to form many varieties of plates, cups, pipes and cigarettes, and they possess a wide vocabulary to distinguish between the different kinds. Brass and earthen pots they buy from others.[1]

The difficulties of determining the extent of their borrowings in the field of religion may be illustrated by the fact that the language of spells and of prayers offered at the time of sacrificing contains a strong admixture of Hindi-Bengali words. This would seem to indicate that there have been many borrowings at this point; but it is also possible that the one who makes the prayers, wishing to put himself into a favourable relation with the spirits, uses a special vocabulary and so removes himself from the common run of his people when he is acting as a mediator between them and the spirit world. Many of the songs sung nowadays are composed in Bengali. There is a large stock of riddles, some of which are asked and answered in Santali, others of which are asked and answered in Bengali, while yet others make use of both languages.[2]

Only incidental reference has been made to the impact of Moslem culture on Santal life. Reminiscences occur of the period of Moslem rule, such as the following statement: "Concerning the *Turuk* (*Turuk*, or Turk, the name by which Santals refer to Moslems), it is said that they ruin our spirits because they cut the throats of fowls the wrong way. If we eat

[1] Another discussion of the linguistic evidence, giving many examples, and the whole stated from a somewhat different point of view, is to be found in Professor Sten Konow's introduction to Bodding's collection of Folk-Tales.

[2] In a suggestive article published in *Africa* for June 1946, Professor F. C. Bartlett has expanded his thesis in the Julian Huxley lecture of 1944 that each primitive culture displays both "hard" and "soft" points. The methods which he has outlined for determining, in the examination of any particular culture, what constitute the hard and soft points, and in particular the story method, may furnish valuable results when applied to the study of Santal culture.

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by their parents. It is no uncommon sight to see a man striding along the road with a carrying pole across his shoulders; in the basket slung from one end he carries some of the family cooking utensils, while the youngest member of the family sits confidently in a basket at the other end. The immediate economic advantage of this annual migration, without which they might be forced to leave their present homes with dire consequences for their tribal stability, is secured at a heavy price. In addition to the toll on their health, tribal sanctions are loosened away from the village. Offenders against the tribal law, runaway brides, women accused of witchcraft, and many others who do not wish to submit to discipline can find a refuge away from their homes, and each year the number of those who elect to stay "east" is growing.

The older generation regard the yearly exodus as the prime cause of moral laxity because it flouts an old taboo. Formerly no Santal was supposed to cross the Damodar river, which forms the northern and eastern boundary of the Bankura district. When at first men were drawn away to work over the river the women were not allowed to accompany them. The reason given for this prohibition was that by crossing the river they would bring misfortune on themselves and their villages. The underlying causes may be connected in part with the fact that the tribal gods are forest gods and could not protect them on the other side of the river, where there are no forests; and partly linked with the fact that the Damodar has an important place in their customs for disposing of the dead.[1] Whatever they be, the old taboo is now ignored.

During the last few days of *Pus* (mid-January) and at each month's end till the Spring festival, parties of men, women and children can be seen returning along the roads in single file, the women always in front. They are bent on reaching their own villages before the festivities which mark the turn of the month. The old people watch for their return and the relieving of their responsibilities. They enjoy greater leisure and may be seen more often squatting on the narrow ledges that surround the houses, sunning themselves. As men and women return from the east they find employment chiefly in felling trees and in carting both wood and leaves to the railway. For many years the traditional attitude of the Santal to the forest has been to make clearings and begin cultivation. The forests of the area are privately owned by the landlords, and they are exploited for their timber.

[1] See Chapter 12, p. 153.

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in the dung heap. Another Soren sub-clan is known briefly as the Sidup' Soren, and the name is connected with a custom followed when they are making their sub-clan sacrifice. The man squats on the ground in the courtyard of the house holding before him a sheaf of paddy. Meanwhile his wife squats nearby with her back to her husband. He passes the sheaf over his head to his wife, who receives it with her hands lifted above her head and takes it into the house. She may not perform this service if she has formerly been the wife of another man and is either a widow or has been divorced. The women of this sub-clan cannot wear a *campa*[1] flower in their hair.

There are two stories current concerning the origin of the Cilbinda Hàsdàk', or the Hàsdàk' who killed a kite. One of them states: "In the days of the early ancestors many very wonderful things used to happen. At that time kites were causing a great deal of trouble throughout the countryside. Every day they used to snatch away not only men's chickens but also the grown fowl, and in addition they used to take kids, young pigs and children. In this way they were the cause of much sorrow to men. Seeing this state of affairs, one of the Hàsdàk' brothers who was working out in the fields hid behind his clod-crusher and shot a kite through the hole in the middle, and from that time his family got the name." An even more suggestive version is more widely known. An old man belonging to this sub-clan told the story thus: "Formerly our ancestors fell into great difficulties. They were engaged in transplanting rice seedlings and had plucked them from the seedling beds, but there was no rain and so they could not proceed with the transplanting. Now, there was a kite perched in a tree adjoining the field. They shot it, and the blood moistened the land so that they were able to carry on with their work."

The claim to belong to the original sub-clan is made by many people belonging to various other divisions. Binu of Tantidanga made this claim for the sub-clan to which he belonged. He was a Jihu Hàsdàk' and he used to say: "They were the first of the lot." The name is derived from the fact that while their ancestors were hunting in the Khandarae forest they ate the flesh of the *jihu*[2] bird. Since that time they will never eat it, nor will they touch anything that is deep blue in colour, lest people say that they are touching the blue eggs of the jihu bird.

[1] *Ochna squarrosa*, L.

[2] There are two kinds of birds so named. The *Hàonda jihu* is the Bengal Babbler, *Malacocercus terricolor*, and the *Janum jihu* is the green Babbler, *Chalitorius striatus*.

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practice of making an offering of his own blood is followed by the magician[1] when he is attempting to cure sickness. While the function of the priest is to deal with the tribal spirits, it would seem that his co-priest has to propitiate relatively unknown and fearful spirits; one might almost describe him as a kind of "minister for foreign affairs" in relation to the spirit world.

Santal worship centres round its sacred places, the most prominent of which is the *jaher*, the sacred grove usually to the west of the village. It consists of a number of tall, slim *sarjom* trees with perhaps one or two trees of other varieties, the whole having been left standing since the village was first founded. The surrounding forests have been cut down to form land for cultivation and for the homesteads, so the grove stands out from the landscape. Apart from festival occasions there is usually little to show the sacredness of the place, but the practice varies greatly from village to village. Two of the tallest trees standing side by side are thought to be the abodes of *Marak Buru*, the national spirit of the Santals, and of his female consort *Jaher Budhi*, the Old Lady of the Sacred Grove. At the side of the former tree one sometimes discerns the blackened stones of the fireplace at which the village priest cooks – apart from the rest of the village—his share of the offerings. Other relics of festivals may be found, such as an ear of paddy still attached to its stalk, tied round one of the trees and left there since the time of the offering of first-fruits. Sometimes there are semi-permanent posts in the ground near the more sacred trees, two in front of the trees and two at the back, with cross-pieces joining them to form the framework on which a temporary thatch is placed during the festivals over the place where the sacrifices are performed. One of the trees is the abode of the "Five and Six", and near it a post standing in the ground represents the place of one *Laga Thakur*, who acts as their watchman. Removed to a little distance is the place where the food of the villagers is cooked: the meals eaten here are communal. There are other trees at which the *kudam naeke* makes his blood offering to the boundary spirits, and these are indicated during the festivals by means of a piece of string. In some villages one finds indications of places at the edge of the grove at which one or other of the sub-clans performs its sacrifices. In some groves the space at the foot of the principal trees is tended carefully as befits a shrine. The ground is cleared and plastered regularly with cowdung and water, a cactus hedge is planted to

[1] The *ojha*. See Chapter 8, pp. 94 ff.

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keep away marauding cattle and goats, and large earthen effigies of elephants and horses are set in position as worthy mounts for the spirits. The grove is not usually much more than a hundred yards away from the westernmost house in the village, but sometimes one finds that the dwellings of the people have been moved owing to sickness or some other reason and the grove remains in its original site. The determination of the site of the grove is an important element in founding a new village. Naturally there are few opportunities for observing the process at the present time, but the tradition is kept alive among the Santals, who tell that the choice of the site is made by the spirits themselves. They do so by taking possession of certain of the villagers and expressing their wishes through them. These men take stones and place them at the foot of three *sarjom* trees, which should be in a row, two for *Maraṅ Buru* and *Jaher Budhi* close together, and the third for the "Five and Six". Other trees are then set apart for a second female spirit known as *Gōsāē Era*, and also for the *pargana boṅga* and the boundary spirits.

Maraṅ Buru is the spirit who possesses the most clearly defined individuality. The name means "Great Mountain", but it is interesting to note that the word *buru* means not only a mountain but is also used for spirits in general, especially when it is coupled with the more usual *boṅga*. The use of *buru* combined with *boṅga* suggests that *buru* originally meant "mountain", that it was then used for "mountain spirit" and then as a synonym for *boṅga*. Another name for *Maraṅ Buru* is *Liṭa*, which is a proper name and does not appear to refer to any attributes. The name *Liṭa* is frequently used in stories and also in conversation, but it is not used in invocations. The Santal name for a rainbow is the "bow of *Liṭa*". *Maraṅ Buru* is invoked on all occasions when offerings are made, and he is a complete sharer in all the fortunes of the tribe, good and evil. He seems to be regarded as a kindly but capricious old gentleman. The references to him in the mythology clearly indicate his dominant position. He appeared on the scene at a very early stage in the life of the first pair. He found them living in a state of innocence and told them that they had not yet learnt to taste the joys of life. After introducing himself to them as their grandfather and so establishing an intimate relationship between himself and them, he taught them how to brew beer and left them for a few days. When he returned he chuckled to see the change in their appearance, for during his absence they had become drunken.

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At sunset the unmarried men of the village bathe and then go to the nearby forest, from which they cut and bring back two branches of the *karam* tree. These branches, known as "virgin" *karam*, are set upright in two holes dug for the purpose. A piece of cloth is placed over the branches and a small light is lit in front of them. After the preliminary dancing one of the village elders recites the myth of the *Karam*, beginning from the creation myth; the story of the origin of the world is ordinarily referred to as the *Karam binti*. The recital is followed by another dance, which lasts through the night and is changed at cockcrow. The celebration continues till sunrise, when the branches are taken down to the water near the village by the same young men who brought them from the forest on the evening before. The youths immerse themselves, and the branches are floated away in a manner similar to that employed in floating away the bones of the dead.

The myth relates the story of the *Karam* to their own tribal history, and, as one finds in all Santal myths, memories of early wanderings are prominent. The following version was related by Durlob Murmu,[1] and it forms a continuation to the creation story:

"The name of Pilcu Haṛam and Pilcu Budhi's eldest son was Karmu Senor Siṅ. The eldest daughter was Hisi. They had two sons, who were called Karmu and Dharmu. Now Karmu was of the Häsläk' clan, and their maternal uncles were the Kisku *rajas* and the Maṛndi rich men. The Kisku lived at Campagor and the Maṛndi lived at Cirulagor,[2] and between the two villages flowed th. Sitanala river. The people from both villages used to go to the river for their bathing and drinking water. There was a quarrel between them over a bride, and while the fight was on the Kisku killed the father of Karmu and Dharmu. After this they fell into great want. One day they went out to beg and were on the way to Campanagar. They came to the banks of a river, and Dharmu lay down at the foot of a *karam* tree and fell asleep. The name of the river was Tatijhari—it was the place where *Maraä Burn* had first woven cloth garments. Below that place he had made a small embankment, and that place was called the Saḍoyar valley; just below it he had bathed, and so the place was known as Bathiṅg river. That river had sprung from the Lope mountain hard by the Bel banyan tree, and its waters flowed towards the sunrise.

[1] See Chapter 6, p. 65, footnote 2. [2] Cf. reference in Chapter 6, p. 74.